

SIDE #4

Doublewide, Texas

BABY, SLOGGETT

*A spotlight comes up downstage right on Norwayne "Baby" Crumpler, enthusiastic good ol' boy in a sleeveless flannel shirt, below-the-knee cut-off camouflage pants, work boots, who is near an overturned huge lard bucket, shovel in hand, studies blueprints. Haywood Sloggett, elderly, cranky, in khakis and a cardigan, enters SR.*

SLOGGETT. (*Furious.*) Baby Crumpler, I'm at the end of my rope!

BABY. Hey, Mr. Sloggett! Ain't it a pretty day? Why don't you pull up a seat and rest your bones?

SLOGGETT. I am not sitting on any lard bucket like some kind of dimwit! You said you'd haul off that busted-down stove but I still see it behind that fire-trap you call a "shed."

BABY. (*pleasant.*) Well, I know I said I would – and I'm gonna – but a mama possum just moved her babies into the thing and Georgia Dean says that ol' Kenmore's not goin' anywhere 'til those little possums are grown and move into their own appliances.

SLOGGETT. (*Explodes.*) Over the years, I watched you Crumplers drag in three more trashy trailers and park them directly in my line of vision. I've suffered through your constant trash-burning, the illuminated life-size manger scene you leave out all year 'round and your weekly *everything-under-a-quarter* yard sales! I'm sick of living near you!

BABY. We try to be good neighbors – always offer to burn your trash with ours, invite you to go with us to monster truck rallies. I even put hundred-watt bulbs in Mary *and* Joseph to make sure you can 'em on sleepless summer nights. But nothin' we do seems to make you happy.

SLOGGETT. Because you are a no-count bunch and you just proved it again by putting that twin bed on top of you and your mama's doublewide.

BABY. Oh, I did that 'cause I have all these unsightly tan lines, but up there I can get even coverage and nobody can see me naked.

SLOGGETT. I can see you! And I don't *want* to see you! Especially from my kitchen window; this morning I almost gagged on my All-Bran!

BABY. Hey, maybe regularity's the key to your anger management.

SLOGGETT. I wouldn't have to manage my anger if *some people* would manage their stupidity!

BABY. Yeah, those kind of folks get to me, too. It's like when you're dead, you don't know you're dead. Maybe it's the same when you're stupid.

SLOGGETT. Well, I won't argue with the *expert*. (*Watches Baby step off a measurement.*) What ungodly mess are you about to make out here now?!

BABY. I dropped by Cousin Belita's Endo of Time Survival Depot and she gave me forty percent off these plans for an underground shelter. I'm lookin' for the right place to dig it. (*Measures Sloggett's backside.*)

SLOGGETT. (*Slaps at him.*) Get away from me! What're you doing?!

BABY. I'm thinkin' I can make it big enough for *all* of us. 'Course we'd keep you and Georgia Dean at opposite ends of the bunker. I mean, what's the point of savin' your lives if you wind up killin' each other?

SLOGGETT. What makes you think I'd crawl into a hole with you people?! I don't want to be stuck with you in some survival pit! I'd rather die first!

BABY. Cousin Belita says without a shelter, you most likely *will*.

SLOGGETT. Belita's nuts! Frankly, I'm starting to wonder if *all* you Crumplers suffer from mental illness!

BABY. Well, nobody's complained so far.

SLOGGETT. Listen, your father bought this land for *pasture* and when he died and your mama put trailers on it I cursed the day I sold it to him!

BABY. Now, deep, deep, *deeeep* down in your heart you don't mean that. Without our trailer park, you'd be way out here all by your lonesome.

SLOGGETT. It's *only* a quarter-mile from town! I build that house so my wife could look out the window on *nothing* but rolling hills and Texas sky. I'm glad she didn't love to see what you've done to her view. This junkyard-on-wheels is an eyesore and an insult. I'm done with you people. Mark my words, things are about to change around here! (*Storms off stage right.*)

BABY. (*Calls.*) Whatever you say, Mr. Sloggett! But you better eat early tomorrow, it's Mama's turn on the tannin' bed. Brace yourself! (*Blackout.*)